King Missouri River Master Manual Revision Bill
Frequently Asked Questions

What would this bill do?
This bill would require the Army Corps of Engineers to recalculate the total amount of flood control storage space within the Missouri River Reservoir System so that it is sufficient to control the largest flood experienced in the System. The bill would also require the Corps to adjust the System's two flood control storage zones prior to the runoff season each year to ensure that there is adequate space in each to prevent serious downstream flooding.

Why does the System's flood control storage space need to be recalculated?
According to the Missouri River Master Manual, the current flood control storage allocation of the System is largely based on the vacated space required to control the 1881 flood. Prior to this year's flooding, this made sense, as the 1881 flood was seen as the "high water mark" by which all other floods would be judged. However, given the historic flooding that has taken place this year, it is clear that this year's flooding now represents a new "high water mark", surpassing the flooding of even the 1881 flood. We know this to be the case because, as is mentioned above, the flood control storage space allocation of the System is designed to control an event as large as the 1881 flood. This year's flooding, though, overwhelmed the System's capacity. As such, it is important that the flood control related functions of the System management be adjusted accordingly. To do this, the Corps must recalculate the amount of storage space within the System that is allocated to flood control storage, and it must do so using the model not of the 1881 flood, but of the greatest flood experienced – the flood of 2011.

Why does this bill require the Corps to adjust the System's two flood control storage zones each year prior to the runoff season? If the bill already requires the Corps to have enough storage space in the System to prevent the largest historical flood, wouldn't the Corps automatically use that increased storage space whenever needed to prevent flooding?
It is true that the first important step in this process is to ensure that there is sufficient flood control storage space within the System to control the kind of flooding that was experienced this year. However, equally important is ensuring that this space is actually used each year as necessary. As such, this bill would require the Corps not just to recalculate the amount of storage space within the System that is allocated used for flood control purposes but also to actually manage this storage space each year to prevent serious downstream flooding.

Does this bill make any changes to the System's "Congressionally Authorized Purposes"?
No. Instead, this bill merely aims to ensure the Corps has the ability to continue to meet its responsibilities under the System's flood control authority in light of this year's historic flooding.

What are the Exclusive Flood Control Zone and the Annual Flood Control and Multiple Use Regulation Zones that are cited in the bill?
The total storage capacity of the Missouri River Reservoir System is currently 73.4 Million Acre Feet (MAF), of which 16.3 MAF is currently allocated for flood control purposes. 4.7 MAF of storage is allocated to the Exclusive Flood Control Zone, the storage space of which is used exclusively to help control downstream flooding in the event of extreme flooding. In addition to the storage space allocated to the Exclusive Flood Control Zone, there is 11.6 MAF of storage allocated to the Annual Flood Control and Multiple Use Zone. The storage space of this zone is used for the capture and retention of normal and flood runoff each year. Taken together, the storage capacity of these two zones represents the 16.3 MAF of System storage space that is currently allocated for flood control purposes.